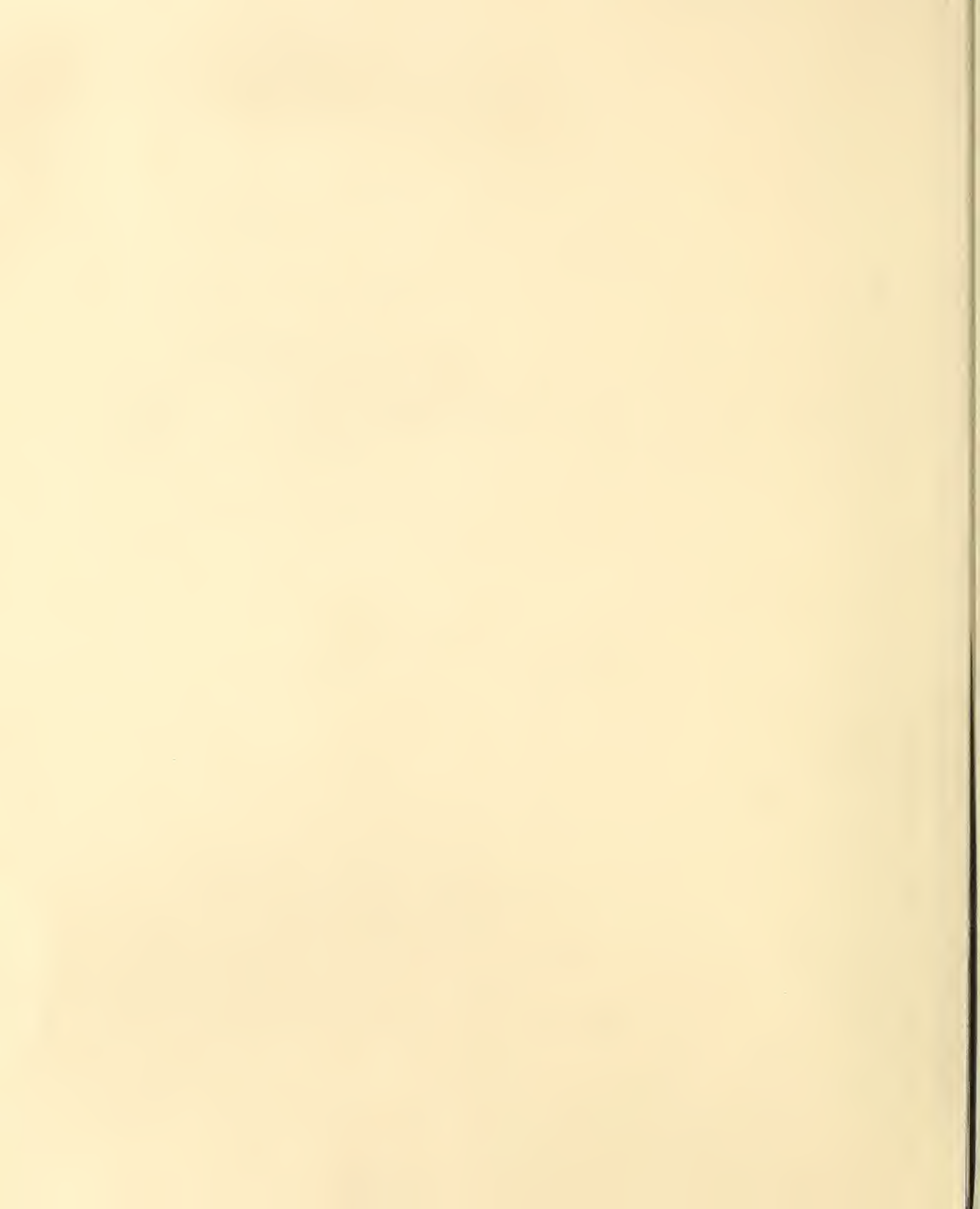


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ECONOMICAL BUYS IN THE MEAT MARKET

HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by Miss Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics and Mr. W. C. Davis, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, delivered through WBC and 45 other associate NBC radio stations in the National Farm and Home Hour of March 8, 1932.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody:

Mrs. Carpenter in her last three talks took us right through the vitamin alphabet from A to G. She pointed out just which foods are the best known sources of the different vitamins, and your letters to her tell how practical you find these facts on vitamins when it comes to planning meals.

Now today, Mr. W. C. Davis, of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, is here to give his help on another angle of the food question. Even though a dollar does buy considerably more food of most kinds than it did a year or two ago, we have to be surer than ever that we are getting the most for that dollar. For many years, Mr. Davis has followed the ups and downs of the meat market, wholesale and retail, as a meat grading expert, and he has noted the steady rise in the quality of our meat supply, as well as the trend of prices.

By the way, Mr. Davis, what were those figures you were quoting the other day on the drop in prices of meats since 1929?

MR. DAVIS: It was the retail prices in New York City that interested you most I think, Miss Van Deman. Retail meat prices, the country over, have declined considerably from the levels of three years ago. We do not have prices from all cities, but the figures from New York apply in a general way to the rest of the country. The average retail price of good grade beef in New York during February this year was 13 cents per pound lower than in February, 1929. Good grade lamb was down 20 cents per pound, and the average price of pork was almost 10 cents per pound lower.

The statisticians figure that each American eats about twelve pounds of meat per month. On that basis the monthly meat bill for each member of the household is now \$1.40 less than it was three years ago, or about \$7.00 per month less for a family of five. This represents a drop of \$84.00 per year for the average family. Roughly speaking this means that a dollar will buy 50 per cent more pounds of beef; 95 per cent more of lamb, and 53 per cent more of pork products.

Today the market price of live hogs is lower than in 32 years. This isn't very cheerful news for the man who is selling hogs from his farm. But if the consuming public takes advantage of the low price and buys pork, the live market should improve, and everybody get some benefit in the end. The price of all pork cuts, both cured and fresh, is remarkably low in the retail markets right now.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Are there any particular cuts of fresh pork, Mr. Davis, that are especially good buys? Of course, local preferences and conditions have their effect on prices, and we realize that you can't speak for the country at large and fit all local markets. But what can you tell us about pork shoulder, for example?

MR. DAVIS: I can tell you it's a mighty good buy. You can get fresh pork shoulder for 9 cents a pound, at the New York City scale of prices. And pork loin, which so many of us think is the choicest of all fresh pork cuts for roasting, is around 11 cents a pound. Also smoked ham and breakfast bacon are cheaper than in 10 years.

MISS VAN DEMAN: You spoke of beef a moment ago, Mr. Davis. Can you give us some marketing tips on beef cuts? Is there the usual premium on the choice tender steaks and roasts?

MR. DAVIS: Not quite. An odd thing has happened to beef prices in some of the larger cities. The demand for low-priced cuts from the forequarter has increased, while the demand for the higher priced cuts has fallen off. The result is that rib roasts and porterhouse steaks of the Government grades of Good and Choice are now selling in New York City at a price range of 10 to 20 cents per pound below that of February, 1929. And there isn't so much spread in price as usual between the forequarter cuts and the hindquarter cuts.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, that sounds as though we might pick up some bargains in what we ordinarily think of as the higher priced cuts of beef. Anyway, it would seem a good idea to ask the price of all the different cuts before making a purchase. Oftentimes it's economy to buy one of the larger tender roasts that are so good sliced cold the second day.

Now, on lamb, Mr. Davis, haven't prices declined as much as on beef?

MR. DAVIS: Yes, Miss Van Deman, they certainly have. In fact, lamb prices have come down more than beef prices. New York City prices on loin and rib lamb chops have dropped 20 to 23 cents per pound. Legs of lamb are about 20 cents per pound lower, and stew meat 15 cents. When the stores offer specials they reduce prices even more.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Let me see, at that rate, a five-pound leg of lamb which will serve a family of five at least twice costs less than 10 cents per serving. And there will be some left-overs for soup. The cost of a shoulder roast of lamb is even less.

It looks as though if we do some picking and choosing in the different kinds and cuts of meat, we can get one of our important sources of protein at very moderate price.

Well, thank you, Mr. Davis, for all these pointers on buying meats. Perhaps some day you'll explain about this Government meat grading and what it means to the consumer.

Now, we've got to be going, Farm and Home Listeners, but next week, Miss O'Brien will be here to tell you about some of the new cotton fabrics on the market.